# COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

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*COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS is intended to provide quick updates on issues of interest to members and affiliates of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). It is produced regularly throughout the academic year. This issue covers the months of January and February 2005.*

## COU submits brief as part of the province's pre-budget consultations

On January 17, 2005, Dr. Paul Davenport, Past Chair of Council and President of the University of Western Ontario, appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to present the COU brief, *A Vision for Excellence*, as part of the provincial government's pre-budget consultations. The brief summarizes COU's earlier response to the Postsecondary Review's *Discussion Paper*, focusing on five goals for developing a financially sound, high-quality university sector in Ontario.

For a copy of *A Vision for Excellence*, visit the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca).

## 2005 OPAS Business Leaders' Forum to feature Bob Rae

On February 22, 2005,the Office for Partnerships for Advanced Skills (OPAS) will host its 2005 Business Leaders' Forum, featuring guest speaker Bob Rae, Advisor to the Premier and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Mr. Rae will discuss the comprehensive review of postsecondary education currently underway in the province and will field questions from the invited audience.

Participants will include members of the OPAS Board of Directors, senior executives from the business and university communities, and senior government officials. For more information on this year's forum, which will be held at the Toronto Board of Trade, contact John Spink at OPAS, (416) 979-4341.

## Knowledge-transfer initiatives focus of OCUR visit to UCSD

On January 27 and 28, 2005, the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR) visited the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) to learn first hand about the knowledge-transfer initiatives that have made UCSD one of the leading universities in establishing strong research and development links to the regional economy and in fostering economic development.

The Institute of the Americas was the venue where OCUR members met with UCSD representatives: Dr. Richard Attiyeh, Vice-Chancellor for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies; Dr. Mary Walshok, Associate Vice-Chancellor for Public Programs, Dean of

University Extension and co-founder of UCSD's CONNECT; Dr. Alan Paau, Assistant Vice-Chancellor of Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Services; and Dr. Greg Horowitt, Executive Director of UCSD's CONNECT. Global CONNECT is a collection of firms, entrepreneurs, start-up companies, universities and regional development organizations working together to develop international high technology and life science linkages to create vibrant regions.

OCUR members also toured the Scripps Research Institute and met with several leaders of the Institute, which emphasizes the creation of basic knowledge in the biosciences for the application of medical and material discoveries; the pursuit of fundamental scientific advances through interdisciplinary programs and collaborations; and the education and training of researchers preparing to meet the scientific challenges of the new century.

### $10 million investment in clinical simulating equipment boon to nursing students

In December 2004, building on a previously announced $50-million strategy to attract and retain new nursing graduates and experienced nurses, the provincial government committed an additional $29.1 million in new initiatives that will support nurses through all stages of their careers.

One of the new initiatives is a $10-million investment in clinical simulating equipment – or clinical simulators – to teach basic clinical and patient assessment skills to students as part of their nursing education. These simulators will allow nursing students to practise procedures and receive immediate feedback in an environment that replicates real-life situations yet ensures safe learning.

### 2005 edition of *Facts & Figures* now available

COU recently published the 2005 edition of *Facts & Figures: A Compendium of Statistics on Ontario Universities*. The report provides aggregate statistical information on such topics as Ontario population, applicants and registrants, students, faculty and staff, finances and physical facilities as it relates to Ontario universities. This latest edition, which can be found online at www.cou.on.ca, includes data up to and including 2003-04 where available.

### Preliminary fourth edition of research *Success Stories* posted on COU web site

COU has posted a preliminary fourth edition of university research *Success Stories* on its web site (www.cou.on.ca) as production continues on this edition. *Success Stories* profiles university research projects being undertaken by faculty, staff and students across Ontario. This edition, which is expected to almost double in size by the time of its anticipated May publication date, describes projects funded by both the federal and provincial governments.

## OPAS receives funding to help foreign-trained professionals upgrade skills

In January 2005, OPAS received funding from the provincial government to lead a project that will tackle some of the barriers facing foreign-trained professionals who require university upgrading. Initially OPAS will work with an advisory committee of representatives from Ryerson University, University of Toronto, University of Windsor and York University. Together, they will research and identify barriers, and then develop a call for proposal submissions by universities to address these barriers. It is expected that this will lead to new practices that will more effectively integrate foreign-trained professionals into the Ontario university system. The project will be ongoing until March 2007.

## Preliminary statistics released on secondary school students applying to university

On January 19, 2005, the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) released its preliminary report on secondary school application statistics, completing the first phase of the university application cycle for fall 2005. By the January 12th deadline, a total of 72,968 secondary school students had applied for admission to an Ontario university, up from last year's mid-January total of 71, 222 applicants. OUAC continues to receive and process applications, and will update application statistics on a monthly basis, beginning in early February. For more information, visit the Centre's web site (www.ouac.on.ca).

## Lakehead University hosts February meeting of Council

Each year, one of Council's five regularly scheduled meetings is held at a member institution. This year, Lakehead University hosted the February meeting of Council. Meetings of Executive Heads and Academic Colleagues were held on February 3 in Lakehead's state-of-the-art Advanced Technology and Academic Centre, and the Council meeting the following day was held in the Senate Chambers. President Frederick Gilbert welcomed Council members to a dinner on February 3, with guests including members of Lakehead's board of governors, vice-presidents and senior-level Thunder Bay officials. Kevin French, former Director of the Universities Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, also attended the dinner and was thanked for his work on behalf of Ontario universities.

## Senior aide to Prime Minister meets with OPAS Board of Directors

On November 29, 2004, Peter Nicholson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Policy, to the Prime Minister of Canada, attended a meeting of the OPAS Board of Directors. Mr. Nicholson discussed the evolving nature of Canada's economy, highlighted some of the key issues currently facing the country, and outlined questions related to labour market, skills, e-learning and innovation for the board's consideration.

## COU hosts two international delegations

- On December 14, 2005, representatives of COU met with a delegation of 31 university presidents and senior university and college administrators from China's province of Henan. The visit, which was organized by the China Training Division of the University of Toronto-York University's Asian Business and Management Programme, enabled members of the delegation to familiarize themselves with the content and structure of higher education in Ontario.

- On December 15, 2005, COU representatives met with two senior members of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Dr. Gholam Reza Zarifian, Vice-Minister for Student Affairs, Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology; and Dr. Seyed Jawad Azhari, Science Counsellor, Embassy of Iran. Matters of mutual interest and bilateral importance were discussed.

## Sun Life Financial to administer $14-million University Health Insurance Plan

After an extensive review of proposals from several major insurance companies, COU has selected Sun Life Financial – a leading provider of health benefits to university students across Canada – as the insurer for the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), effective April 1, 2005. UHIP provides health coverage comparable to OHIP for 28,000 international students and employees studying or working at most of Ontario's universities. Annual insured premiums under the plan are approximately $14 million.

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